

Course Site Design on Moodle: Implications for Teaching and Learning (Poster)

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Abstract

How the Internet has revolutionized language teaching and language learning has been extensively covered in the literature (Blake, 2008; Jarvis & Krashen, 2014; Levy, 2009; Richards, 2015), so that many foreign language teachers can no longer picture themselves teaching without the Internet in the classroom. Moreover, the advent of learning management systems (such as Moodle) has made blended learning a popular practice in foreign language education, resulting in numerous studies that discuss the learning outcomes of such courses (Sun, 2014; Tsai & Talley, 2013; Tsai, 2014). The availability of high quality Web-based materials suitable for teaching foreign languages raises the important question of how these resources should be organized and used effectively for classroom instruction.

This poster presents a pedagogically sound, user-friendly course model for beginning level foreign language instruction on the Moodle platform, based upon a Turkish course developed and currently being taught by the author at Tel Aviv University. It is maintained that course layout reflects the underlying pedagogical objectives of the course and therefore is an integral part of curriculum design and has implications for teaching. The model proposed is an integrated course layout which combines monthly chronological units with thematic ones and is displayed in the grid format. This orderly and balanced arrangement of the course content is an excellent anchor for teacher and student alike. It raises the students' motivation and leads to effective language teaching and learning, as observed in the students' performance throughout the year and their response to an anonymous online teaching evaluation survey. The survey given at the end of every course has 7 items to evaluate different aspects of the course and the instructor. In June 2015, out of 11 participants enrolled in beginners' Turkish, 8 students completed the online survey, resulting in a response rate of 73%. The last item in the survey reads: *The course website contributed to learning*. All the students who completed the survey evaluated this item as 7, which is the highest grade.

A successful language course can be attributed to a combination of factors such as good quality teaching materials, an appropriate instructional pedagogy and an enthusiastic teacher. This paper suggests that in the era of blended learning, course site layout deserves special attention as a new parameter that can contribute to the success of blended learning language courses. The principles of the integrated course layout developed for Turkish can be applied to other beginning level foreign languages.

Key words: Moodle, course layout, blended learning, language education.

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